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BARNARD CASTLE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



REPORT
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.
for the year
1943.

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D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health,
Assistant School Medical Officer.
20th June, 1945.

Council Offices,
"Woodleigh",
BARNARD CASTLE.
18th June, 1943.

Mr. Chairman & Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting my report for the year 1942. A notable event in the year was the sanctioning, by the Ministry of Health, of the Council's Scheme for the provision of an additional water supply to the town. Work on the scheme was commenced at the end of October, and was not completed by the end of the year, but it is to be hoped that if the droughty conditions of the recent years are repeated in 1943, the additional supply will do away with the necessity for the strict rationing of water, with its inconveniences and dangers to the public health.

Although the war continues, it cannot be said that the general health of the nation has been affected to any appreciable extent. The incidence of infectious disease, including tuberculosis, has been remarkably low in Barnard Castle, in spite of the considerable amount of overcrowding in the town, resulting from the war.

I am again indebted to the members of the Council, and to the Officials for their co-operation in matters connected with my department.

I am Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J.G. PALEY.

Medical Officer of Health.

Vital Statistics Registrar General's Figures for 1942.

Comparative Table of Birth Rates.

<u>This Area</u>	<u>Birth Rate.</u>	<u>England & Wales Birth Rate.</u>
Boys 29.	14.4 per	15.8 per
Girls 55.	thousand.	thousand.

<u>This Area</u>	<u>Still Births</u>	<u>England & Wales Still-Birth Rate.</u>
	<u>Still-Birth Rate</u>	
Boys 2.	0.8	0.54
Girls 2.	per thousand.	per thousand.

Comparative Table of Death Rates.

<u>This Area</u>	<u>England & Wales.</u>
<u>Deaths of Infants</u>	
under one year - 2.	not given
Infant Mortality Rate - 31.	Infant Mortality Rate - 49.

Number of Deaths.

<u>This Area</u>	<u>England & Wales.</u>
<u>Males</u> 33.	
<u>Females</u> 25.	not given.
Death Rate - 12.6 per thousand	Death Rate - 11.6 per thousand.

Cause of Death.

Heart Disease	17.	Ulcer of Stomach	
Diseases of		or Duodenum	1.
Circulatory system	3.	Other Digestive Diseases	1.
Cerebral Haemorrhage	2.	Tuberculosis (all Forms)	3.
Pneumonia	4.	Diabetes	1.
Encephalitis	4.	Suicide	1.
Grippe	6.	Other violent causes	3.
Cancer	6.	All other causes	6.

The crude birth-rate shows an increase of 1.0 per thousand compared with the figure for 1941.

The crude death-rate shows an increase of 1.4 per thousand compared with the figure for 1941.

Notifications of Infectious Diseases.

	1940	1941	1942.
Cases	48.	34.	7.
Whooping Cough	11.	36.	3.
Scarlet Fever	30.	9.	19.
Diphtheria	2.	3.	2.
Measles	10.	3.	7.
Scarletina	2.	1.	1.
Cerebral Pyrexia	1.	2.	3.
Septic Fever	0.	0.	1.

A high incidence of scarlet fever cases occurred in April and May, at the same time there were a number of cases of septic sore throats, but there were insufficient signs to diagnose these as scarlet fever.

Most of the cases of scarlet fever were children between the ages of 1 to 10 years, and in the majority of cases the disease was of a mild type. During the epidemic, children in the Church and R.C. Schools were examined and a few suspected carriers were excluded from school for a short period. All the cases of scarlet fever notified, were sent to the local hospitals, 13 to Harwood and 6 to Lindale Crescent.

The case of Enteric fever was a non-civilian case, and was obtained from the S.M.S. Hospital. No source of infection was suspected in the Urban District.

Tuberculosis.

One case of tuberculosis (non-pulmonary) was notified during the year.

Diphtheria Immunisation.

	Age under 2 years.	Age 3-15 years.
Number of Children who received a full course of immunisation during the year	70.	78.
Percentage of population considered immunised at 31st Dec. 1942.	55.1%	64.8%

Cases of diphtheria occurred in children under 15 years, during the year.

The Council's scheme, whereby parents could arrange with their doctor to have the immunisation carried out at the surgery, free of charge, continued throughout the year. During October and November, Ministry of Health propaganda slides were displayed in local cinemas, by request of the managers. In addition, propaganda advertisements from the Ministry of Health were displayed in the local press for three consecutive weeks. In November and December, two additional immunisation clinics were carried out at the Barnard Castle School, 1, Infants School.

The inoculations were performed by private practitioners, and the attendance of children at the sessions was satisfactory.

Parents appear to be becoming increasingly "immunisation minded" but, like Hickonet and the Mountain, they are more readily amenable if the doctor is brought to the child rather than the child be taken to the doctor in his surgery.

Treatment of Scabies (Scabies Order 1941).

Arrangements were made and sanctioned by the Council, for the treatment, under the Scabies Order 1941, of in-patient cases of scabies, at the A.R.P. Cleansing Station, Dundas Square. Adequate facilities are provided at the Centre, including shower cabs, a portable bath for young children, and hot and cold running water. The treatments are carried out by the whole-time staff attached to the Mobile First Aid Unit, comprising two male ambulance drivers, and two auxiliary nurses. From September, until the end of the year, 32 treatments were given, involving 16 patients.

Of the 16 patients treated, 4 required one treatment, 10 required two treatments and 2 required four treatments.

The incidence of scabies, high as it was before the war in some areas has increased since the onset of hostilities.

Conditions directly attributable to the war, such as increased overcrowding in reception areas, or lack of adequate facilities for personal cleanliness in bombed areas, have doubtless favoured its spread. Compulsory treatment by modern methods, as provided by the Local Sanitary Authority, will do much to counteract this spread. An essential factor in its success, is the treatment of all affected members of a family at one and the same time. If a lotion, thorough preliminary cleansing and opening out of infected areas of the skin is necessary. Application of a suitable medicament to kill the parasite will then effect a speedy cure.

It is evident that effective treatment can best be carried out by trained attendants at a suitably equipped treatment centre, and it is to be hoped that the facilities now being made available to the public by Local Authorities, will be continued after the war.

Government Evacuation Scheme.

	Mothers and accompanied children	Unaccompanied children	Nurses Helpers & Teachers.
Number of Evacuees in the area at 31st Dec. 1941.	53	99	17
Number of Evacuees in the area at 31st Dec. 1942.	23	35	21
Decrease or increase per year.	- 30	- 64	4

I am indebted to the Billington Welfare Committee for the above figures.

In December a Government Hostel and Staff Bay for Evacuee children, was opened at Healds Hall, Healdham. The Hostel is staffed by a Matron and cook-housekeeper and accommodation is provided for 15 children. The Hostel provides for the reception areas comprising Barnard Castle Urban and Rural Districts, Starborth and Darlington Rural Districts.

Air Raid Precautions.

Throughout the year, conditions remained quiet in the area, and no incidents were recorded.

The Mobile Unit staff under Dr. J. S. Ward, Medical-officer-in-charge, and Mrs. War, Nurse-in-charge, continued to meet at regular intervals for practice.

The First Aid Parties also, maintained efficiency by frequent meetings and practices, under the supervision of Mr. R. Railton, (Area A.R.P. Officer, Casualty Services, and A.R.P. Instructor 1st Class). .
Courses in Anti-gas training and decontamination and a revision course in First Aid, were held during the year.
In August a combined exercise was held in the town in which the Mobile Unit and First Aid Parties took part, together with other branches of the Civil Defence Services. Incidents were staged in a saw-mill and timber yard and the Mobile Unit set up a temporary First Aid Post at the Railway Station, nearby. To add realism to the occasion thunder flashes and tear gas bombs were used, but nothing daunted the personnel who acted with keenness and efficiency throughout the exercise.

School Clinic & Infant Welfare Centre.

Weekly sessions of the School Clinic, and fortnightly sessions of the Infant Welfare Clinic continue to be held in Barnard Castle, under the County Council Scheme. Attendances of school children at the School Clinic have again been adequate.

